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## POLITICAL EMINENCE.

A FRENCH writer has remarked, that among the greater part of European nations, when a man begins to feel his strength and to extend his desires, the first thing that occurs to him is to get into some public employment. In our own country, we observe a large class known as politicians, intent upon a like object, of whom a like remark would be very applicable. The form of our government and the spirit of our institutions are in such wide contrast with those of most nations, that to judge of the qualifications and character of our rulers by a foreign standard would lead us into the most extravagant error. And although we would be guilty of no infringement upon aristocratic privileges, nor encroachment upon hereditary prerogatives, by raising to high political station men from any class in life, yet the interests of society, and the well being of our institutions, might be sadly disregarded. There is a tendency at the present day to become *altogether* democratic—to establish a democratic equality of opinion, as well as a democratic equality of rank—a uniform standard of political merit, as well as a uniform standard of political right. It may be asked why this tendency manifests itself more now than formerly. Is it because the work of legislation or of administering the government has become easier, or less involved, or of minor importance? Have the responsibilities of men in official stations diminished in weight or number, as the number of

offices has increased? There is no ground for either of these conclusions; but the most correct answer would be, that the standard of statesmanship has in many cases been brought down to the capacity of men of ordinary minds. There are also other considerations than those of actual worth and merit involved, by which we can account for the low estimate put upon the requisitions of candidates for popular preference in political life.

The principles of men are often sacrificed, and the voice of judgment is made to yield to the voice of self-interest. The influence of money, the "love of which is the root of all evil," often shapes the course of political events. The success of candidates for posts of trust and honor often depends upon the amount of wealth which can be enlisted for the service. What pure-hearted republican does not recoil at the thought that there are millions of dollars invested in political schemes, with which the sanctions and suffrages of freemen are bartered as merchandise? This moneyed influence is one of the evils against which the service of every true patriot should be enlisted, and against which the voice of public sentiment should be lifted up. But there is another direction to which the attention of the prudent statesman, the reformer of political abuses, should be directed. In this age of progress and development, political as well as *spiritual*, some men would run far in advance of their times. They are intent upon securing popular favor, and are lifted high up by the fascinating charm which the novelty of their scheme produces upon the feelings and disposition of their fellows. The creeds of scheming politicians are scarcely allowed time to be removed from the mould and submitted to the test of public sentiment, and their merits to be decided on, before they strike sail and shift their course upon a new tack—wafted along by the strong current of expediency. When such is the phase of political life, it is most necessary that our rulers be men of the times, suited to the exigency of the occasion, ready to maintain the right at all hazards, whether of reputation, of favor, or of self-interest. To attain such excellency of character is no easy matter; to possess it, the highest qualification. The plea of availability is not unfrequently made the ground of political preferment. This is a triumph of the voice of party

spirit over the voice of enlightened sentiment, and by its resistless power, like the swollen current of an overflowing stream, raises men far above their natural element, or carries them far beyond their depth, in matters of national policy. The glory of military achievements is often made the occasion of advancing men into posts of distinction in the administration of public affairs. At this time the chief element of political influence is the renown of martial deeds, the boasted merits of martial heroism. The tented field and the conflict of armies afford opportunities for the display of courage and heroism, but they are not the situations where men learn to legislate, and devise plans for the welfare of the whole community. The hero who leads to victory deserves to have entwined upon his brow the laurel of victory; but the mantle of power, the palm of political triumph, is the reward of moral and intellectual achievements. In the exercise of a nation's gratitude, these claims of noble service are by no means to be overlooked, but they must not be made the ground of indiscriminate political elevation; for that is not patriotism which sacrifices the public weal in return for individual benefits. The good of the whole people is as much dependent upon a proper discharge, a faithful execution of those duties arising from official station, as the success of the battle is dependent upon the skill and capacity of the commander. But the ability to command an army does not involve nor require those essential qualities which are the characteristics of the enlightened statesman, and hence a fitness for the former position does not constitute a fitness for the latter. Besides, with the majority of those upon whom it devolves to make choice of rulers, the mere name often has such a potent influence, and enlists such a universal sympathy, that the moral and intellectual virtues of the man are often overlooked, and the meed of true greatness is conferred upon the fame-heralded hero. But if military achievements and the attainments of martial science do not render men worthy of political eminence, will not intellectual ability be sufficient? Yes, there is a nobility of intellect which all must respect and admire, but this alone will not entitle men to political eminence. Intellectual power, without right principle, is more dangerous than any other quality, for its influence is more extensive, its victims more

numerous. "Being without well being is a curse, and the greater that being the greater that curse." The genial sympathy of the social nature too often chills amid the cold and heartless theories of speculative minds; and not seldom deluded man, following the phantom of his distorted conceptions, would cut asunder those social ties which connect him with his fellows, and would throw off that claim by which mankind hold him in perpetual fealty. A selfish ambition is too often the governing motive in men's minds, and worshipping at this shrine, he becomes a slave to that most cruel of tyrants, *self*.

"All understand their Great Creator's will,  
Strive to be happy, and in that fulfil,  
Mankind excepted—lord of all beside,  
But only slave to folly, vice and pride."

There is an intellectual greatness joined with excellence of life, sincerity of sentiment and purity of heart, which constitutes the true character of men worthy to bear our national standards. With such qualities no man will lack patriotism, and without them all the boasted professions of love for country and devotion to her welfare are but as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." It will be a sad lesson for Republican America to teach posterity, that her statesmen have been too great to be her rulers.

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### THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY.

FROM the earliest times different nations and countries have been drawn to turn their attention to some particular class of objects. In ancient days the Greeks shone in literature, the Romans in conquest, the wild, barbarous nations of the north of Europe in war. More recently has the same thing been exemplified: the Spaniards and Portuguese led the way in discoveries, the Italians in the fine arts. But in our own day to what is the attention of mankind drawn? Chivalry has disappeared; knight-errants no longer wander forth to defend fair ladies, and destroy the horrible monsters that roam over the earth. War has ceased, at least in comparison to what

formerly existed, when every man's hand was against his neighbor. Adventurous discoverers no longer steer over unknown and wonderful seas, seeking for fabulous El Dorados and fountains of perpetual youth. By the never ebbing but ever advancing tide of civilization, the remnants of barbarism are constantly being swept away. Law and order have succeeded anarchy and bloodshed. It is no longer necessary that right and innocence should be supported by the lance of a powerful warrior in order to obtain their true position. Nations no longer rush precipitately into an unprovoked contest, in order to gratify the passions of their rulers. The division of power prohibits the idea of universal conquest. There is no longer any unknown land. The seas have been traversed, the forests have been swept away before the advancing march of civilization; until now, like the sun, having passed round the globe, it returns to its rising place in the East. Our own beautiful country has furnished an El Dorado to the eastern hemisphere, a fountain of perpetual youth, at which the nations of Europe may drink in copious draughts of re-invigorating freedom.

But mankind are as busily employed as ever. The spirit of inquiry is abroad on the earth. Having removed all the obstacles which nature placed to retard his physical advance, man now seeks to subdue all mental obstructions; having conquered all her mighty works, he is now pushing his investigations into her most hidden secrets. The smallest object as well as the largest attracts his attention; from the grand problem of the centre of the universe, round which revolve the innumerable myriads of suns and systems, down to the formation of the minutest insect, not a phenomenon to which he does not attend. We cannot estimate the beneficial effects of this spirit. Look at the change wrought out, when, after its almost total destruction in the dark ages, it sprang up like the fabled giant of old, with greater strength from its fall, at the discovery of America. Would you contemplate its improvements? Look at Galileo with the first made telescope, solving the mystery of the earth's movements; then turn to yonder temple of science, look over the complicated, space-annihilating instruments, and ask of the sentinels on watch to what object their attention is directed: is it to the waning and waxing

moon? is it to the glorions orb to which our own mighty earth acts as a satellite? No. Deep in the depths of space, far beyond the utmost stretch of imagination, they prosecute their search, and calculate concerning universes of whose existence Galileo never dreamed. But this is but an example; from all the grand and mysterious works of nature, this spirit has drawn good.

"In fields of air it writes its name,  
And treads the chambers of the sky;  
It reads the stars, and grasps the flame  
That quivers round the throne on high."

And has the Spirit of Inquiry then been unprofitable, has it done no good? Is not the binding together of the world by the chains of commerce any good? Is not the education now given to almost every one in all the civilized nations any good? Is not the rapid progress now made in the arts and sciences, by which the condition of man is so much improved, any good? What brought about the discovery of this continent, gave it hardy and adventurous settlers, endued with the consciousness of a new but holy faith? What caused the keels of commerce to visit every land? What gave fire to bear man's banner on the wave? That power, "subduing space and time, links man to man and race to race." What roused up the desire for knowledge in the human breast, and by constantly increasing the information already gained, is continually giving a greater and greater range to the power of the human mind? Has it not been this all-pervading spirit? And if with the imperfect means at its command it has brought about such great things, what may we not expect from it, now that, fully in motion and like the avalanche gathering strength and momentum from its own progress, it sweeps over the earth.

Rapidly is this spirit now performing its mission.

"When, from the sacred garden driven,  
Man fled before his Maker's wrath,  
A spirit left its place in heaven,  
And crossed the wanderer's sunless path."

From then till now it has been always hovering near our fallen race, but the end is now approaching. And what end is there to its labors, what goal to which it may direct its foot-

steps? Is not its mission the total reformation of all things? Is not the time of its endurance fixed to that when man shall arrive at perfection, when every obstacle shall have been removed, when all that is secret shall be revealed, and all that is hidden shall be made plain, when the millennium of inspired writers shall have come, and the world, laden like an argosie with the treasures of knowledge and peace, shall float over the ocean of time to some heavenly harbor on the shores of eternity?

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#### ORATION: CREATIVE POWER.

THE phenomena of the natural world, especially among those unaccustomed to examine into their direct natural causes, have a strange twofold power; on the one hand, of suggesting to the imagination the most extravagant moral meanings in their existence, and on the other, of throwing the soul back upon itself, into reflections upon its own nature and destiny. But peculiarly is this the case with a phenomenon which, like the Northern Lights, superadds to its other attractions the all-fascinating one of inexplicable mystery. Baffling the investigation of philosophers in all ages—one of those latent wonders to comprehend which the mind of man has endeavored in vain—it is indeed calculated in a marked degree to intimate to the imagination a profound moral intention in its being, and to invite the soul to a contemplation of itself. And the close natural resemblance which this phenomenon bears to another in which man already recognizes a great spiritual significance, will aid not a little its suggestive power. In the prismatic bow which spans the heaven of storms, it is given us to read the enduring promise of the Almighty, that deluge never again shall overcome the earth. This is the everlasting scroll on which God has written his decree that the hills and the valleys, the crowded marts and the broad continents of man's habitation, shall never again be overswept by the floods of ocean. This is the beneficent arch on which the Eternal finger has traced, "Be comforted, children of men." And why, meditates the elevated soul, should not this other, greater, more mysterious spectacle have its office of reminding us of something deeper than that Nature is capri-

cious? In long, pale, flickering beams from the common zenith above—itsself overhung with clouds and inconstant vapors—irradiates the cold, mysterious light. A mighty tent, its spire lost in the highest heaven, and its great circumference based on the gloomy darkness of the farthest horizon, it waves above and around us, the sport of ethereal storms—fit dwelling-place for the majesty of primeval Night! Of what is this the abiding memorial, but that God from his throne in the heavens has descended to man? So streamed out over the skies the ineffable glory of light, after the song of Miriam had ceased over the waters where perished the horse and his rider—after the manna had been gathered from the morning plain, and at last the great I AM descended to the Mount of Sinai. Thus effulgent before the gaze of bewildered men, appeared the heavens of the Jordan, when from a point of celestial brightness came forth the dove and the voice. And now, a monument of that mercy out of the fulness of which the effulgence of the Infinite has illumined from time to time the cerulean of earth, gleams over the midnight concave the splendor of the Borealis. Such then is the extravagance of that moral meaning which such a phenomenon may intimate to the imagination. But nobler to be contemplated is the power which such a spectacle has of turning in upon itself the inquisitive gaze of the soul.

Dwelling upon the inexplicable combination of elements which are themselves as inexplicable, and forced to seek refuge for his speculations in the great idea of Creative Power, the man turns inward his reflections only to perceive that one tittle of that power inhabits not his being. Distracted by the petty things of his own circle of business or pleasure, and engrossed with trifles over the destiny of which he was allowed perhaps a seeming, temporary sway, he had well nigh established his own self-sufficiency. But now in its full force rushes upon his subdued mind the humiliating thought that the greatest, ay, the only truly great energy, that of the Creative Will, is not his own. By laborious research, he may learn the causes of many phenomena. He may discover in accordance with what laws the bow of storms displays itself in the heavens the planets move with the harmony of numbers in their orbits, or seed-time and harvest, summer and equinox succeed each



other over the face of nature. But more than a discoverer he can never be. The universe of stars and planets, of suns, moons, systems, and constellations, is before him, and before him too the world with its elements and principles, its combinations and associations, its developments and phenomena, endless in number and variety. And these it is given him to investigate, to reveal, to unfold, to combine again, as his fancy shall dictate; but to create a new principle, to make that true which was not true before—to this he can never aspire. And the words of the dying Newton well befit the lips of every philosopher: "I seem like a child *picking up here and there a pebble* on the shore, while the great ocean of truth lies unrevealed before me!" But if man is never a creator in the natural world, no more is he a creator in the moral. Bards have sung and orators have spoken, and their works preserved to us through the lapse of ages, and descending a princely heritage, would fain be denominated *creations* by an admiring posterity. But *creations* they are not. The proudest of these dealt with language prepared to his hand; he operated upon minds and hearts fashioned by other influences; and in fitting that language to those natures, he but complied with a law and obeyed a principle. Before Homer touched his harp or Virgil sang, was it not true that deeds of high emprise, the exploits of warriors and the notes of peril, would entrance the ears of men? And what did they more in their mighty songs than, through a skilful, harmonious blending of Ionic or Roman numbers, remember this common truth? They *discovered, combined*, but never *created*. So with the great painters, sculptors, and architects of the world. And the brave statesman, at a festival of art that will toast the painter's pencil as "Creative Power," exhibits a far purer gratitude than philosophy. For examine these so-called *creations* of artistic power. To create is to call into being something which never in any shape existed before. It is to make that true which formerly was not. Which then of the master-pieces of the world, from the Sybil of Michael Angelo to the Martyrdom of Lessing, through the whole wide domain of art, deserves the name *creation*? What color or what image ever portrayed on canvas was not either the imitation or association of colors and images before existent? And was it not true long ere any master ever lifted a brush, that precisely the combination which he was

then entering upon, just so conducted, would result in exactly the effect he reached? The painter then, like the poet, the orator and the man of science, associates and combines, but nothing more. So with your sculptors and architects. The fabric of St. Peter's and the Venus de Medici dwelt in the forest or the marble on the one hand, and the nature of things on the other, before an axe or a chisel was ever thought of. Man united and confederated the material of the one, and modified and shaped that of the other. He composed both, but created neither. For to create requires the preëxistence of no material. And had this man or that been a creator, there would have been no need for him to go to the forest or the quarry, but from the very air around him he might have called up, as by the wave of a magic wand, cathedral and statue.

And thus we might despair. But the thought rebounds upon us, that the toys we play with are *mighty*. True, we only discover; but the infinite creation of God is our field. True, we only combine; but the materials are more various than our thoughts—their diversities of association endless. Six thousand years of research and invention have scarcely made us poorer. Still remain vast regions to be explored—myriad combinations to be attained. Are you a man of science? Still deep, breathing mysteries every where surround you. In heaven and earth and flood—they fly, they walk, they swim. Light, a mystery, leads you to them in the valleys of earth; and darkness, a mystery, shows them in the fields of heaven. Are you a poet? Great themes yet abide in the realms of imagination. A mightier epic remains unwritten than any which man has yet conceived. Even the wondrous argument of a God Incarnate has yet to swell the lofty measures of verse. Are you an orator? Wrong is still rampant; still are there sufferings to be relieved, still are there hearts to be swayed, still are there beauties in goodness and holiness to be manifested through the magic notes of eloquence. Are you a painter?—a sculptor?—an architect? Mightier scenes than the Annunciation remain to adorn the canvas—greater thoughts than the Laocoön to “be set in the everlasting rock,” and loftier models than the Parthenon to be lifted towards the heavens. For why should man retrograde? The infant Hercules strangled serpents in his cradle, but the aged tore in pieces the Nemean Lion.

## THE CASTLE BY THE SHORE.

An extract from the German, translated for the Nassau Literary Magazine.

KNOWEST thou the lofty castle,  
The castle by the shore?  
Clouds, roseate and golden,  
Around the summit soar.

It seemeth as 't would enter  
The glassy wave below,  
Or mount aloft, aspiring  
Where clouds at evening glow.

I know the lofty castle,  
The castle by the shore,  
With moonbeams playing round it,  
With mist-wreaths covered o'er.

The voice of wind and ocean,  
Oh! seemed it glad to thee?  
Did lofty halls reëcho  
With minstrelay and glee?

No! every breeze and billow  
Lay silent and unstirred;  
One tearful song of sorrow  
From out the halls I heard.

Didst thou behold above thee  
The monarch and his queen,  
The glow of purple garments,  
Of golden crowns the sheen?

And thither did they carry  
With joy a lovely maid,  
The sun himself scarce nobler,  
With hair of golden shade?

I saw the aged parents;  
No crowns with flashing ray,  
But sorrow's sable garments—  
The maid had passed away!

THE ELOQUENCE OF DESOLATION. — *Continued*

THAT eloquence is instrumental in persuading the sons of men to attempt the accomplishment of whatever is truly great, however dangerous or laborious, is a truth of which the student of elocution will not impatiently be reassured. Diligently studying the peculiar operations of the mind, the secret springs of action, he naturally expects, as a recompense for his labors, the power of enlisting the sympathies of the multitude, of imparting to them his own longing for noble action. Prompted by this earnest desire, that as the star of Bethelhem shone bright in the firmament and directed Israel's shepherds to the birthplace of Christ the Lord, so he might glitter in the political horizon, and guide his country to the goal of greatness, the youthful student imprisoned himself in a gloomy cavern, in order that he might there pursue uninterrupted those studies and labors essential for the formation of the truly great orator. These, by cultivating and refining his mind, enabled him to stand amid the contending elements of virtue and vice, as proudly conspicuous towers some firm rock amid the roaring and warring of the water. Endowed with an inflexibility of purpose, an intellect capable of grasping and executing the grandest designs, an ambition susceptible alone to lofty and holy aspirations; in addition to these, an enthusiastic love of country, a sincere admiration for the virtues of antiquity, Demosthenes triumphed over nature, checked the rolling tide of degeneration, and purified its turbid stream from the poisonous elements which infuse themselves through all the varied channels of social and political greatness. He rekindled by his fervid eloquence the fires that glowed so brightly at Salamis and at Marathon. And that enthusiastic love of liberty, that ardent patriotism which made the haughty Persian tremble, like the lightning's flash, shot with awful splendor along the threatening cloud. Neither was this power over the passions of men possessed alone by Demosthenes, nor confined within the narrow limits of Greece, but it was, and is as universal as the canopy of heaven. That august Senate, which justly deserved to be likened unto "an assembly of kings,"

was held spell-bound by the magic sound of the voice of Cicero. But why shall we seek in the firmament of antiquity for specimens of the power of eloquence, when even here, revolving around old Nassau, as a central sun, are those *two* stars of greater brilliancy, the pride and glory of their *respective* constellations? In whatever part of the globe inhabited, there the power of eloquence is known and felt greatly to abound. But though the influence of orators over the passions of the children of men is indeed great, yet there is an eloquence still more powerful. It speaks neither to the ear, nor to the imagination, nor to the understanding, nor to the souls of the sons of men; but to all these combined. Its influence is direct from heaven, and its power must surpass the effect of human eloquence, howsoever exalted or sublime. It is the eloquence of desolation. And that this should be so, that appeals made direct to the soul from the natural world are more powerful, that the sympathies are more deeply enlisted by the eloquence of desolation, seems but coincident with the design of Omnipotence. For in his infinite wisdom God has so formed the universe that its harmony would be seriously affected by the violation of any natural law; like the human body, a wound inflicted upon any of its members is painfully felt by all. Let but one planet revolve out of its appointed orbit, and perhaps the equilibrium of the solar system would be lost for ever. Let the fiery comet, seemingly speeding its way through the immensity of space unrestrained by any law, hold a direct course a moment longer, and the world would be wrapt in flames. Let unrelenting famine wreak her furious vengeance upon but one devoted land, and hear the cry of woe and anguish uttered by the world. And that this is true, that the suffering of one portion of the race elicits the sympathy of the other, why did mankind so deeply sympathize with wretched, starving Ireland? The voice of the gifted Prentice uttering a nation's sorrow, a nation's sympathy, sounded, like the trumpet's blast, high above the deep groans of the multitude, a signal for virtuous, for exalted endeavor. The deep-toned thunder of Niagara echoed the mournful sound to the blue wavelets of Mexico's gulf. While the surging billows of the mighty Atlantic sent the wail of woe, "o'er hill-top, dale, and pearly stream," to the golden sands of the Pacific. Greece, too, when

struggling beneath the iron heel of despotism, felt the sympathetic throb of the world's big heart; and the deep, wild strains of eloquence gushing from the noble soul of the "Sage of Ashland" were heard, like the enthusiastic Hermit, preaching a new crusade for the rescue of the Temple of Freedom. But though it is indeed true that the eloquence of Prentice and Clay affected greatly the sons of men, and influenced their enthusiastic sympathy to flow through proper channels for accomplishing most good; it is yet equally true that their eloquence was but the reflection of an eloquence all-powerful in its nature—the reflection of a nation's woe, of a nation's suffering. It was but a weak reutterance of the eloquence of desolation.

There is another field in which the eloquence of desolation is strikingly, though mournfully, portrayed:

"Even as the tenderness that hour instils,  
When summer's day declines along the hills,  
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes,  
When all of genius which can perish dies." BYRON.

Lately our country has been called to mourn the loss of many of her most gifted sons—of many of her most noble champions. Scarcely had she laid aside the robes of mourning for the heroic champion of Southern rights, ere she was called to lament the loss of the patriot Clay. Oh! every heart swelled big with sorrow, every eye glistened with the tender tear, as the second of the immortal *trio* sank calmly, peacefully, sweetly into the grave. Yes; we have seen the sun sinking gradually to rest, until his brightness "was buried in the gulf of darkness;" but the whole firmament blushes with the roseate tints still lingering above the horizon. Sad, sad indeed it is to see the gifted, the brilliant thus passing away. But who will say that there is not a deep, though solemn, eloquence pervading their chamber of death? To see that soul, born for the liberty of heaven, desert her clayey tenement, and on pinions of immortality soar to those regions of eternal bliss, naturally raises the mind from earthly objects to contemplate that which is heavenly and divine. Death is the most solemn, the most impressive, the most eloquent of all desolations. Enter that dreary receptacle of the dead, and though those broken and mouldering monu-

ments may tell us not whose last deep sleep they are so faithfully guarding, yet, all desolate, they impress deeply the soul by their silent, but irresistible eloquence. Let us linger here. For lo! approaching slowly o'er the lea is a sad train of mourners. A mother follows her last hope in sadness to the grave. Hear those sobs which tell of grief and anguish wrung from the desolate heart. See that look of despair as she drops the last token of motherly love into the grave. The scene is unendurable. As when from the mountain-top the wintry torrents boiling and foaming rush into the lake below, which, already full, must burst its rocky barriers, and flood the surrounding plain with its turbid waters; so this scene affects the already fulness of the soul.

But these are not the only cases in which the eloquence of desolation is felt indefinitely to abound. No matter on what hand we turn, in what field we look, its power is manifestly displayed. Its influence is still felt if the imagination sails o'er the turbid waters of the "dark blue sea" to that land sublimely picturesque, where the "Naiads moored their shelly skiffs," and the Graces tenanted their airy temples; whether she lingers among those magnificent ruins of ancient splendor, those huge "foot-prints on the sands of time;" or if she drops a tear of envy upon the tomb of that noble Roman matron, who after the eloquence of man, nay, even the hoary locks of priesthood had plead in vain, threw herself with unfeigned sorrow at the feet of her son, and implored him with bitter tears to spare his country. Nor did they flow in vain; for the iron heart and revengeful spirit of Coriolanus was melted by a mother's desolate tears.

C. T. J.

FICTITIOUS LITERATURE. — *Mc Elhenny*

THE literature of the world is divided into two distinct species, the authentic and the fictitious. What each of these respectively includes we need not stop to mention. The great utility of the former is universally acknowledged, for it is universally felt. It is the experience of the world, the impress of men upon their times, the history of the past; and it serves as instruction for the present, as admonition for the future. But the utility of the latter is not so obvious, and to the consideration of its pretensions, its nature, and its effects, we intend to confine ourselves in this short essay.

It surely cannot be denied that fiction and fictitious literature possesses a pleasing and fascinating power over the mind seldom to be found in reality or authentic literature. It delights; it fascinates; it intoxicates the brain with a temporary, indefinable pleasure, and hence it has allured its thousands of devotees. But much as it has contributed to the gratification of even highly refined and intelligent society, it is a question whether ever it has been real benefit to the world. And now we would be understood to question, not that common and pernicious species of light novelism alone with which the world is flooded, but the propriety and actual utility of the most approved works of fiction—the productions of our most ingenious and popular sentimentalists—those works which have for their professed object the cultivation of the delicate feelings and sensibilities of humanity, the cultivation and development of the principles and powers of the moral and intellectual nature.

In this world of realities, this wide sphere of both moral and intellectual action, and of such abundant sources of illustration from experience and from nature, fiction has been employed as the most effectual means of enforcing truth, and fictitious literature has been defended, not only as contributing highly to the gratification and innocent amusement of society, but as most effectually cultivating the better principles of our nature and qualifying us for the various important duties of real life. Now the mystery of its popularity and the true test of its



utility is certainly to be found in our mental and moral constitutions, and the means by which we are to ascertain its final effects is by comparing the extent of its influence with that of the actual circumstances of real life to which those parts of our nature are so admirably adapted. It must be particularly borne in mind, (for it is the mystery of the sentimentalist's success,) that both mentally and morally we are precisely adapted to the circumstances and relations into which we may possibly be brought. From the veriest pathology of our nature to the fullest development of our principles and emotions into acts of duty to our fellows or our God, we are by nature constituted for a response to the call of any duty the circumstances may present. We are subject to emotions caused by what we see or hear which incline us to act, and to both the inclinations and the emotions we are totally passive. The account, but especially the presence, of suffering, for example, excites within us emotions of compassion, and these emotions incline us to mercy; and we have no more to do with the emotions and inclination while our eyes are fixed upon the object or our ears open to the account, than we have with the image on the retina while we look at an object, or the ideas which certain sounds suggest to our minds by entering our ears. A wise provision indeed to call our attention to our duty. Conscience dictates to us our duty, and a sense of duty and consideration of the same (mark the process) urges us on to deeds of benevolence, or of other character, as the case may be, through which, and through which alone, our emotions find vent and our moral principles are developed. Now the sentimentalist proposes, with the advantage of this principle of pathology, to cultivate all the sensibilities of humanity and develop all the principles of morality, altogether apart from the tangible objects on which either of these must terminate. He professes to refine the taste, to cultivate the affections, to develop the virtuous principles, and, in short, to call forth into healthy and vigorous activity all the principles of humanity and morality without the counterpart objects of one of these emotions. To this end he transports men in their imaginations into every possible situation in which the desired emotion could be excited. He perhaps describes a community, a family, or an individual sunk into the very lowest possible depths of

human wretchedness and guilt—the very extreme of moral depravity. He excites their pity, their philanthropy, and hopes to cultivate their humanity. Or he takes the fashionable circle as the theatre of his scenes, and he presents to the mind of his readers all the manners and customs of refined society, and thus he thinks to cultivate the taste and refine the manners. Or he pictures off the miseries of the poor and the ignorant, the sufferings of the invalid and unfortunate; he portrays glowing instances of heroism and patriotism, of parental affection, filial respect, and conjugal harmony; and thus he thinks to inculcate the proper principles, sentiments, and habits, and prepare men for the relations and duties of real life. But why not grant now that he has accomplished his object? He has excited the very *emotions* which real circumstances would have done. He has excited the very emotions which real circumstances *should* have done, to produce the actions on the part of those affected which social and moral relations render obligatory. He has made them weep with those represented as weeping; he has made them mourn over human misfortunes and human miseries; he has made the bowels of their compassion to move with tenderness and charity towards the unfortunate, the miserable, and the degraded; and all this is effected upon the very same principle of human nature that real circumstances affect the mind and feelings. If now he has aroused the genuine emotions and moved the principles of human nature, has he not educated his subjects in the duties and relations of real life? We shall proceed to consider. Whatever the sentimentalist may make men feel, and to whatever height he may excite their emotions, the most evident thing is that all ends in feeling. They may be weeping over the imaginary distress of some unfortunate fellow-human, or they may be excited to admiration of the favorable contrast between virtue and vice, between refined and rude life, and between the virtuous and the vicious, the refined and the rude; they may be made to feel the force of social and moral obligations; they may even be made to imagine themselves to be discharging those obligations, and that too in the most genuine exercise of virtuous principles: but so soon as the abstract idea which affects their minds is withdrawn, or so soon as they withdraw their minds from the fiction, their emotions subside, and their virtu-

ous principles cease to be exercised. They throw aside their novel, and find themselves in their own comfortable chair, and with the greatest complacency congratulate themselves on their own susceptibility of virtuous emotions. They dismiss the object from their minds all the easier because conscious of the absence of reality in the occasion of their emotions, and that there will be no demand on the exercise of their sympathy or moral obligations. Let us for a little consider the difference between him who is thus pathologically affected by the fiction, and him who has travelled his way to the same state of feeling through real circumstances. In the first place, in the case of the one the object is presented to his mind, perhaps ere he is aware, and every thing that could disgust, discourage, or divert the attention from that which is absolutely necessary to the emotion desired, is kept carefully out of sight; the other is personally present, and has actually encountered and overcome all that could divert the mind, distract the attention, and offend the senses. While the former does not only not encounter obstacles, but feels himself entirely free from the demands of duty, the other has put himself, both hand and heart, in the very place where the labors of his hand, the goodness of his heart, and the exercise of his judgment are required. While the former is a stranger to all sense of duty, and is totally passive to all that he feels, the other is actuated by this sense, and by it is enabled not only to encounter but to overcome every difficulty for the sake of its discharge. While the former is yet a stranger to the offices of a good citizen and to the experience of an active member of society, the other has a practical knowledge of the business of the useful man, and is prepared, by his experience, to act his part in the theatre of life. The former has made no impression upon the world, and has received no reciprocal benefit in the form of mental and moral cultivation by labors of goodness and benevolence. Like a drone, he is too lazy to exert himself and extract the sweet from the flower, lest he may encounter the prickles of the brier, and contents himself with pacing over the shadow cast upon the ground. If it were possible to cultivate the intellectual powers, and develop the principles of the moral nature by fiction, we could easily imagine a mind totally excluded from the world furnishing itself with the necessary information and

becoming adequately prepared for the realities of the world, and leaving the world as wise as the one which has undergone the drudgeries of real life. We could imagine a heart cultivated in all good principles as the one that has enjoyed all the reciprocal benefits of an active life. A person could live a long life, be well educated both mentally and morally, and yet die totally ignorant of the *reality* of any art or science, or of any thing that ever transpired in the world.

There is one great cause of the popularity of fictitious literature which we must notice, and that is, its power of exciting within us the feelings and emotions in which we enjoy the greatest satisfaction. As we enjoy the highest degree of inward satisfaction and self-approbation, in other words, of peace of conscience, from the discharge of our duty, so also do we feel a high degree of pleasure in the emotions which precede the conscientious discharge of duty. And as we are pleased with ourselves for any thing socially and morally correct, so are we pleased with meditating upon it, or with our conceptions of it. And it is most especially pleasurable when we can feel thus on our comfortable chair or luxurious sofa, in all possible bodily ease, and nothing to discompose our mind; out of all danger of encountering disagreeable duties, or exposing ourselves to public criticism or censure. He who discharges the duties of the active citizen has to suffer the fatigue of both mental and physical labor, to expose himself to public notice, and often to encounter disagreeable and heart-sickening obstacles; but he who would be educated by fiction, is carried over the unpleasant, and enjoys the pleasures of simple emotions. Which of the two men, think you, would have the greatest degree of the confidence of his fellows and neighbors, the one who has been educating his principles and cultivating good habits by fictitious literature, or he who has been an active member of society all his life? But surely it is he who has seen the world that knows what it is. It is he who acted in society that knows and understands the duties of a citizen. And it is he who has practised the business of real life that knows what it is. Such is the inefficiency of fictitious literature as a means of cultivating and developing mind and morals.

But a few words more, Mr. Editor, by way of practical

application, and we are done. We might now turn to the consideration of another feature of our subject, namely, that it is not only a very inefficient means of education, but injurious to mental vigor and activity. But our space will not allow this, and we will content ourselves by a few remarks, the truth of which is evident to every observer. We too frequently see the injurious effects of fiction in the well-known fact that most who indulge in it become addicted to it to the exclusion of every thing else. This is evidently from its power of keeping up a constant exercise of pleasurable emotions, without any thing to hinder them, and without either bodily or mental drudgery. Now, not to expatiate on the confusion and absolute vagueness of mind, and the state of nervous excitement, in which it leaves them, we can easily estimate the amount of useful knowledge and real information such persons possess. Its effects on society demonstrate too plainly the extent of its utility. The evidences of intelligence and mental cultivation, the character of the conversation, the useless gossip, and not unfrequently the petty slander too often the resort of such, from an absolute destitution of other capital, compared with a company of those versed in authentic literature; presents the former in a very unfavorable light. The former seem to have fed upon the wind, and the windy chit-chat of many an otherwise respectable member of society is only too much to be lamented. But this would furnish matter for a full-sized essay, and as we do not intend to be a reformer, we leave the matter to the consideration of our readers.

ALIQUIS.

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#### BEGGARS AND ORGAN-GRINDERS.

"Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hail-stones, go;  
Trudge, plod, away, o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!"

SHAKESPEARE.

THERE is an old and much-used proverb, that "It takes all sorts of people to make a world." A marvellously specious assertion; a thing by no means improbable or contrary to nature, be the truth as it may. The good man and the bad, the Dives and the Lazarus, the Democritus and the Heraclitus, and a goodly company of others, all combine to make the

active present, all play their respective parts, and keep the ever-varying drama of this globe progressing.

Truly, we live a singular assemblage. Each one seems to be different in some way from another, yet each is a "lord of creation;" each, like the empty shadow in Macbeth, "wears upon his brow the round and top of sovereignty;" each struts out his brief existence, feeling that he has the same right to live, to think, and to act as his fellow. This feeling is natural, *very* natural; nevertheless it may be carried to too great an extent. We are too apt to rely much on our own infallibility; too prone to perceive a mote in our brother's eye, regardless of the prodigious beam which may be in our own; too often thinking we were not made as other men, and gazing with scorn upon those who stand below us, and who possess not the mental and physical endowments with which we are enriched.

Among those we are accustomed to despise, perhaps more than others whom we consider inferior to us, stands the beggar, than whom there is scarcely another man more reviled and abused by his fellows. Every person upon the face of the earth appears to be his enemy; every man thinks himself a better piece of earthenware than he; every one's body is made of a more pellucid quality of dust than his. Forsooth, the beggar's nothing but common potter's clay, the rest of us genuine "petuntze." The man of fashion shuns him as if the mere sight were contamination; the mechanic would as lief take Asmodeus by the hand; the veriest blackamoor in the streets exclaims, Stand by! I'm holier than thou; each and all would fain cry out with petulant Sir Absolute, "Do n't enter the same hemisphere with me! do n't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own." Unhappy biped! how hard thy lot! sufficient, one would think, to engender tearful reflections in such quantities as to keep thy verrucous countenance for ever clean. Fortunately for him, however, he gets abused and kicked around so much, that *familiarity* at length "breeds contempt"—contempt for the jeers and scoffs that assail him, contempt for those that hate him, contempt for all and every thing save his own gloriously ragged self. He wanders about the world in a most wonderful state of squalid independence and indifference. He cares no more for a curse than he does

for a blessing; he will take a crack over the head and a shilling, and ten to one, thank you for both. We would not feel afraid to maintain that he becomes so habituated to abuse that he cannot well exist without it. Kicks and curses come as a matter of course; he would feel as if something were wrong, his dinner would not digest properly, life would probably become monotonous, without them.

Friend, the age of the beggar's trade—think of it! What a subject for antiquarian research! The father, the first progenitor of beggars, would that we had his skeleton! It would be as valuable as an embalmed Pharaoh, as interesting as an aromatic Israelite. We know who first sinned, we can tell who was the first murderer; but who can say who was the first beggar? what person can trace back the pedigree of that ancient class? As easy were it to discover who smacked his lips over the primeval oyster, as he who first of all, in Mesopotamia or in Egypt, shuffled around for cold victuals. Verily, a time-honored brotherhood are they; theirs the very Methuselah of occupations—one pursued long before the days of Moses, antecedent to the foundations of the Ark, coeval almost with the world itself.

Another interesting study, for a reflective mind, is the beggar's character. On this point, time and space alike forbid us to dwell; we would merely crave permission respectfully to recommend Princeton as a most excellent place to observe all the various grades and classes of the "despised brethren." Scarcely a day passes, but what some specimens are to be seen travelling along the streets. They come from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west; ay, from all points of the compass—ever the same—ever panoplied in rags and escutcheoned with dirt. Fortunately for the peace of the community, they come not all at the same time. Gentle reader, peradventure you say one at a time is bad enough: what, then, would be your feelings, should the whole tribe visit you? The mere thought of such a possibility is horrible. In such a case, what mighty, and we may say just consternation, would ensue. Well might the good inhabitants of our usually quiet and tranquil town stare open-mouthed at such a sight! well doubt the evidence of the senses, and with good reason cry out, with an ancient poetess, "The beggars are com-



ing to town." What a thumping of ligneous legs, clattering of crutches, and pattering of bare pedals; what a promiscuous collection of deformities and maladies; what a travelling museum of misery! Broken heads, sore eyes, disarticulated jaws, fractured noses, disrupted limbs, unhinged joints, sprained ankles, cracked knee-pans, sword cuts, bullet holes, gunpowder wounds, skinned backs, railway injuries, bankrupt constitutions, weak lungs, pock-marked faces; and, what might be expected in such a case, a vast number of vacant apartments, called stomachs. The consumptive man; the swelled-faced man; the fever-and-ague man; the man inclined to fits; the man with his foot bundled up; the man who had his hand chopped off; the man who went to Mexico; the man who was carved at Palo Alto; the man who left his fingers at "Lundy's Lane;" the man who lost his all by an eruption of Vesuvius; the old woman with the bronchitis; the young woman with the measles; the female whose children are starving; the little boy with his arm in a sling; the big boy who was blown up by a "steamboat biler;" the timber-toed orphan; the melancholy youth in specs; many more too miserable to be mentioned; to crown the whole, a *loud* miscellaneous smell, that of "old rye" predominating. Although these blessings come not collectively, although there may be variations of the species mentioned, nevertheless, as a general rule, the majority of the Princeton mendicants may be fitly placed in that grand division known by the vulgar as the "hardest kind;" such fellows as we have pictured to ourselves gathered together at the cremation of a martyr; such beings as in childhood nights we dreamt of, when troubled with the nightmare.

A person, on first observing these much-abused gentlemen, cannot fail to be surprised at the great load of misery they are accustomed to carry around with them in their wanderings. Each one is something of a moving Pandora box, in his way, (not as handsome, however, as the one of old,) and almost invariably the proprietor of a most extravagant assortment of the "ills which flesh is heir to." Far from being an affliction, wretchedness is a blessing. The more of a Lazarus he, the livelier the trade. He glories in his misfortunes—makes the most of his diseases; even a trifling injury is a piece of good fortune by no means to be despised. We remember to have



seen one man, who kept his unmentionables rolled up, and who took particular care always to expose a favorite carnosity on his left leg. Verily, we have suspicion that he strove to improve it, and daily caused it to blush, by means of sand-paper and frequent friction. That excrescence must have brought him at least twenty-five cents per day.

But the *most* wonderful thing about the beggar is his morality. This is especially marvellous. He is ever a pattern of virtue and sobriety. He do n't swear, he never lies, he would n't steal, and could n't even recognize the *smell* of whiskey. He may perchance carry a jug, but that, of course, is to bear molasses to a suffering family. His eyes may be dull and blood-shot: that's owing to the influenza and dusty roads. His breath may possess a strong odor: that's medicine swallowed for internal improvements. He may walk crookedly, and meander mysteriously: that's the fault of inefficient legs and corporeal feebleness. All this may be so; nevertheless, it looks suspicious. True, friend, it *does* look bad; still, be lenient, and condemn not the man. It looks bad to see a Soph. at midnight, making tracks from a hen-roost; it looks bad to see a Senior step out of a hotel, wiping his mouth: yet, you have no unfailing proof against them. The one may have been taking a hypochondriac's stroll, the other have simply refreshed himself with an unoffending lemonade. Again we say, be lenient. Gentle forbearance is ever a bright spot in the human character.

Heretofore we have spoken only of strange beggars, and those who, passing once through our streets, depart for ever. Besides these, there are others who live, or pretend to live within a few miles of town; and who, like periodical comets, make their appearance regularly at stated intervals. They differ from the other brethren, in that they adopt the insinuating rather than the direct mode of petitioning; and, in most cases, follow some nominal calling, in order to earn a livelihood. One of this class we well recollect—a bandy-legged old chap, who spoiled razors and told lies for old clothes. He was accustomed, several years ago, to come around about once in six months, with a hone, a strop, and a long story of a child prostrated by scarlet fever. Every time he came his strop was more villanous, and his child worse. Another, who boasted a brass-headed walking stick, and a better half, came every

autumn seeking after broken umbrellas; which having obtained, he repaired; while she, thoughtful woman, collected the money.

We individually have always had a kind of fellow-feeling for the beggar: we pity him, believe him to be truly an unfortunate being; and think that, if any man has a right to become misanthropical, on account of injuries received from others, this one unquestionably should. He has no friends. No one stops him in the street, and inquires after his health. No one requests him to "call 'round." He may be a stranger in a strange land; yet no one takes him in. He may suffer from cold, and have damp feet, which, according to many experienced physicians, is highly detrimental to the general wholesomeness; yet to him there is no warm hearth-stone, or smoking hickory. He is a wanderer, debarred from domestic pleasures; an unprosperous being, for the rain to wet and the sun to shine on; a poor human shuttlecock, for every blast to play with. He has a fine chance, it is true, (being often in the open air,) to view and muse upon the wonders of creation; but in general he is no poet, or enthusiastic admirer of nature. He hears no music in the pattering of rain-drops; he can see no sublimity in the raging elements. The electric flash is to him naught but matter-of-fact lightning; the crash of "heaven's artillery," a thundering noise above him; and he himself a beggar in the midst of a shower—a poor man, who would give all the sublimity that could be found in the world for one good and substantial meal. These are the disadvantages of a mendicant's life; but as a picture is always supposed to have two sides, now turn we to the brighter—in other words, the advantages; which, however, we confess are few, and scarcely sufficient to induce any one to learn the trade.

He is free—free as the wind that flutters his rags, so far as he interferes not with others; and is accountable to no man for his actions. He is governed not by fashion, nor keeps up with its changes, for his costume is always the same, and like that of the Chinese, has been so for ages. He prides not himself upon his beauty, nor brags concerning his appearance; but in the fluttering insignia of his office, walks as complaisantly as a beau in his best. No obsequious friend attacks him with troublesome conversation. No one bores him with vile puns,

or borrows his umbrella. He is not afflicted with law-suits. He is not fearful of tailors' bills. He is never called upon to speak in public. Happy man! he is free from all these. He makes no will, nor careth who may fall heir to his old clothes, when he has departed. He dies, and is gone. A green mound marks his resting-place; but no marble perpetuates his name, or prevaricates for the benefit of his memory.

There is a beggar of another and much more respectable class, very common among us. This is a petitioner of a higher order, an aristocratic specimen of the genus beggar; who, despising the arts and frauds practised by the many itinerant members of the fraternity, insinuates his wants by proxy, and in melodious tones grinds out his misery. His eyes are not red with weeping. He presents no long petition on dirty paper, nor tells tedious tales of sorrow. He says nothing of a sick wife and ten children. He does not state himself to have been blown up by gunpowder, or crushed by machinery; but with a stoicism that would not have shamed old Zeno himself, he stands at your door, and grind—grind—grind, is the word, until the reward is received.

We love to hear the music of a hand-organ—that is, a good, jolly one; not one of your melancholy, low-spirited sounding boxes. We love to hear it, not only on account of the music that it makes, but also for the associations that are connected with it. It puts us in mind of the time when we were young; and we well remember how often, when we were about three feet four, we would almost run mad at the sight, and well nigh get fits at the sound of that wonderful instrument.

The outside, to us, was the perfection of art; the interior, from whence came the sound, an awful enigma, an unexplored Herculaneum on a small scale.

And, reader, are there to you no recollections of unique monkeys and educated dogs of childhood days? Are no echoes of bygone music chasing each other far back in the corridors of the past? The organs of thy youth, it is true, may have departed, the dust of the monkeys enriched unknown soil; yet, if thou hadst then any incipient music in thy soul, their memory should be for ever green. Think, friend—think! You can't remember? Then go to a free school, and for the future study "*Mnemonics*."

Even though his music never possessed a charm for you, send him not away—our modern troubadour, our only reminder of ancient minstrelsy. Not so in the olden time. "Ho! the minstrel!" the cry in baronial halls; ho! the minstrel, in kingly courts. Down came the massive bars, back rolled the ponderous gates—never shut, in those days, (heathenish as they were,) against the poor and homeless. The rude turrets shook and rang with his legendary song. Noble dukes, royal warriors, fair ladies applaud his lay, and the war-worn soldiers shout a wild chorus to the minstrel's strain. The red wine flowed fast; a copious goblet stood for him. Organ-grinder! had you but flourished then, you might have far eclipsed them all, your magic box performed more wonders than hosts of tinkling lyres. Truly, with his various stops, what music could he have made! what wild accompaniments to the war-chants of the Goths! what mournful dirges o'er a lost Jerusalem! what notes for the heart to leap to, in the anthems of the brave!

They of old sung of knights in burnished steel, of nodding plumes and glittering spears, of joust and tournament. They chanted of conflicts fierce, of shivering blades, of conquering banners, and warrior skulls on battle plains. He of our day tells far different tales. He has no wild fictions, no musty legends; but grinds out a tune of reality to a real world, that has long since dreamed its dreams, experienced all its romance. The standard may be low: that will be elevated when he is more respected. Give him encouragement, that visiting our Helicons and Castalias, he may give voice to the dumb soul that's dwelling there. Help him, and he may make thee his Mæcenas.

Once again we say, be kind to the beggar, and especially spurn not the organ-grinder. Hark ye! A story runs, that Belisarius once went about with "*date obolum Belisario.*" You may uncloak a hero. Some say old Homer sang, and passed his hat around, in ancient Hellas. You may entertain a Homer unawares.

MUSTANG.

## THE REAPERS.

THE bearded grain is full and high,  
The wide field waves in golden light;  
The sickle swung 'neath morning sky  
Reaps health with every stroke of might.

And serried files are falling fast,  
And bearded ranks are yielding low,  
As toil the stalwart reapers past,  
With chiming step and chiming blow.

A path divides the yellow sea,  
Still back its walling tides recoil;  
With spirits flowing full and free,  
They press with arms more true from toil.

Like fringe along a field of gold,  
With gems besprinkled here and there,  
Beside the fretted isles unrolled,  
The fallen grain lies full and fair.

Reaper! I look upon thy task  
With pride, not envy, in my eye;  
For 'tis a truth I could not mask,  
A somewhat lazy man am I.

I love to sit where breezes wait,  
And angle poetry—as now;  
And most egregiously should hate  
To swing a blade or hold a plough.

I love to take an evening drive,  
With one whose name I couldn't tell;  
But whip me! if I'd rise at five,  
To answer even my marriage bell.

I love to walk beneath the moon,  
With eyes of blue and ice of cream;  
But as for horses, I'd as soon  
Get up a passion as a team.

With pride, not envy, then I turn  
An idle eye upon yon field:  
With pride that man is strong to earn  
His bread from what his acres yield.

With pride that to man's generous heart  
Such holy instincts have been given;  
That while he toils his basest part,  
He lives for Home, and Hope, and Heaven.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. — *Byrd*

WHY was America not discovered before the fifteenth century? No person can presume, unauthorized, to state reasons for the manner of that Being's acting, whose "ways are not man's ways." But surely it is not improper to attempt an answer to this question, by observing the results which it seems might have followed a previous discovery of America, and the results which have followed its discovery, in the year fourteen hundred and ninety-two.

Revolutions in nations are not the work of a moment. How is it possible for a people acting submissively, to established institutions on sudden, and with no cause to attempt to resist them and to withdraw themselves from their power? "Cause is that which produces an effect;" how then could these things be effected without a cause? Those changes that have taken place in any man's conduct, and at any time, are not brought about at once. His mind first was brought to feel the influence of causes in operation. But when the mind has been acting in a way entirely different from that in which it is now desirable it should act, old attachments, old prejudices must be broken off, and when they have continued long they must be broken off gradually. We are naturally apt to cling to that with which we are acquainted, rather than to that which we are ignorant of. Between the character of a nation and that of a man there is a strong analogy, and what applies to the one will hardly fail of application to the other. Therefore revolutions in nations, whether as regards morals or government, or whatever thing it is, are effected not at once, and may be the result of influences operating for ages. And it is possible that a great revolution may be preceded by changes of comparatively less importance, but all tending to one great end. No country ever sprung from a state of barbarism immediately to one of civilization and refinement. There were intermediate steps. One cannot reach the top of a ladder without taking step after step; no more can a nation, no more can the world reach the highest point of enlightenment unless they undergo change after change, unless they ascend from ascent to ascent. The course of mankind has

been progressive. At one time they might have been seen hastening swiftly on, and at another it would seem as if those influences which had been at work with them had ceased.

But, in all probability, these influences have at no time come to a stand-still, for after a while it would be found that man had been making gigantic strides onward. In that period of history so emphatically called the "Dark Ages," man appeared, if ever he did, to have stopped in his road to improvement. But was it so? Within the retired cloisters, the embers of learning were still glowing, and their inmates, undisturbed by any thing without, were assiduously urging them to a flame. Then it was that numbers were first brought into use, and who can estimate their value? But regardless of these circumstances, look at that which succeeded this gloomy page of history. Could the light which then startled the world from its slumbers have been spontaneous? Can darkness produce light? It is contrary to all experience to suppose that the change, which now took place, was merely adventitious, and that no causes had been constantly at work. No! the changes that have been going on since the world began, all have an end in view.

The Feudal System effected a change in man, and it was itself a change from the former relations existing between man and man. It prevailed when his character was wild and lawless. There was some check needed to restrain him, and this undoubtedly answered, for a time, the desired end, though it afterwards became atrocious and tyrannical. When the feudal system was felt to be obnoxious, then another change takes place; Chivalry is introduced. No system, no contrivance of man, has been unmarked by human weaknesses. Chivalry was defective in many respects, but yet it answered a good end. It softened and refined the feelings of those who felt its influence, and restrained the spirit so peculiar to the system that preceded, and singularly raised the character of the female. It at least changed the manners of men, and by it their intercourse was less characterized by rudeness, and greater harmony prevailed.

The Crusades, at the same time, engaged the attention of men, and though to a great degree injurious, still they were another step to that great revolution which awaited the world. It was then that the true character of its spiritual rulers was seen, in

the rapacity with which they appropriated to themselves whatever was gained by conquest. The charm was now broken, and thoughts of improving their condition now rushed into the minds of all. What would have been the result if America had been discovered in the time of feudalism? What class of men would then have been the founders of this Republic? Instead of being men characterized by noble and virtuous qualities, they would have been those characterized by the opposites of these; and a disregard for right or wrong might have predominated over principles of justice. These must have been moulded into the character of the government, whatever it might have been, and evils as numerous as the blessings we now enjoy would have followed. And even supposing that causes might afterwards have produced a decided change for the better, still the progress of our country must have been retarded, and it would have been impossible for it to have reached its present condition, had it not begun aright. And in the days of chivalry those suited for the enterprise did not arise. Their characters were yet being formed. Darkness at length left the human intellect, and men awoke to a true conception of their nature. Those principles which had been working their way upwards for ages at length gained the surface, and the Puritans and the Huguenots were the vessels chosen to receive them.

There is a reason for America's remaining so long undiscovered. From observing how our institutions have affected those of other countries, and especially those of Europe, the conviction is forced upon us that our country was intended as fulcrum of that lever about to move the world, the influence of Free Institutions. Years and years had passed from the Creation before the great event of 1492 took place. The earth's bounds were limited to the extent of the knowledge possessed by the ancients. They were unconscious of a land lying in its primeval beauty, which was to be the theatre of those scenes, that were in the effects produced to reform mankind; they were unconscious that the character of those men were being formed who were to be the chief actors in them. The timbers and the stones for a Republic, to be erected on a distant shore, were being prepared in their very midst, but they knew it not. When these were ready they were brought hither, and fitted together so silently, "that neither an axe nor hammer was



heard in all the building." And as the structure rose up, men looked and were amazed. They asked themselves, Whence came the material? They forgot the toils and labors of the past.

B.

## Editor's Table.

We hail you again, dear readers and kind patrons, with another number of the Nassau Lit., the veritable *editio princeps* of our editorial career. The circumstances of its nativity have not been very congenial to symmetrical development; but we usher it forth to the light of day, claiming not a little of your clemency. Our store-house of literary ammunition has been selected with reference to the implements of intellectual combat—suited to contend against the hosts of pseudo-isms which are rife at the present day; but we trust no one will presume to amuse himself (figuratively speaking) by *sperting* with our weapons. We had pretty nearly made up our minds to repudiate each and all of those *editorial parasites*, as Diogenes called the mice, when, accidentally having met with a sermon on the subject, setting forth the awful calamities which in old times befell those who were guilty of perpetrating puns, after some reflection, we came to a snap judgment on that question.

It was not more than ten or fifteen centuries after the deluge (for aught we know) that men began to turn their minds to the study of metaphysics, and from that day to this, the same feelings have actuated and prompted them to engage in the discussions of the science. We have been favored with an essay—*illius generis, et sui generis*—for insertion "somewhere" in our magazine, the author very modestly announcing that, not having fully digested his theme, he would decline the privilege of affixing his name, and consequently it remains anonymous. We cannot appropriate the space "somewhere," but we will insert "somewhat" of the production.

Its caption indicates that the writer has seen more or less of the writings of the Fathers, as he presents us with a trilingual title:

PERI ETHON, VEL DE MORIBUS, ALIAS HABITU.

We can only give one or two extracts, *hæc sufficiant*.

"It has been said that man's life is made up of a *bundle* of habits. Now if such be the virtual phenomena, it cannot be unphilosophical to assume as a fundamental proposition, that the disposition of the molecules, the aggregation of the fibres, and the growth and development of the several parts, into long sticks and short sticks, rough sticks and smooth sticks, hard sticks and soft sticks, in short, into every kind of stick which ever was, is, or can be put into a bundle, will depend very much upon the soil in which the animal is planted, and the amount of rain and sunshine he receives." Having finished this sentence, and almost out of breath, we were convinced that the gentleman had either read or heard something of the constitution of matter, and had fancied that he could build up a human character according to the atomic theory. He soon drops the figure, and strikes off into the practical part in plain language, and with wonderful individuality: "All habits might be ranked under

three heads, the good, the bad, and the indifferent." (Admirable classification!) "There are habits peculiar to every business in life, but my essay will only afford space for a partial disquisition on them. Of college life, smoking is one of the most prominent. Though some of the uncharitable Faculty, and 'the most of woman kind' censure students for smoking, yet it is by no means unprofitable nor unpleasant for those who enjoy it. It is a great relief for the tooth-ache and the ennui, two of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of a scholar's happiness. It also presents to a skilful puffer the outlines of most of the geometrical figures, conic sections and pyramidal peaks; and besides, although tobacco is a stimulating weed, yet it greatly conduces to calm meditation and reflection. Mr. Brown, to whom I am much indebted for these views, says he knew a person who, on fast days, used to mortify upon a rump of beef, because it put him in mind, as he said, that 'all flesh is grass.' But smoking teaches far more. It instructs you that beauty, riches, and all the glories of this world, vanish like a vapor." It is evident from the sentiments here set forth that our author is not of the Greek church persuasion, for they, taking Scripture literally, hold that drinking and chewing are proper, because it is putting into the mouth, but that smoking is unlawful, because it is putting out of the mouth. We imagine the seat of our author's mental organism, when he has been laboring to digest his subject, corresponds to that position assigned to the "primum mobile," in the "Alma" of Matthew Prior, where he traces out the analogy between man and a clock:

"So if unprejudiced you scan  
The goings of this clock-work, man,  
You find a hundred movements made  
By fine devices in his head;  
But 'tis the stomach's solid stroke  
That tells his being what's o'clock.  
If you take off this rhetoric trigger,  
He talks no more in trope and figure;  
Or clog his *mathematic* wheel,  
His buildings fall, his ships stand still;  
Or, lastly, break his *politic* weight,  
His voice no longer rules the state;  
Yet, if these fine whims are gone,  
Your clock, though plain, will still go on;  
But spoil the organ of digestion,  
And you entirely change the question."

We are sorry we have not a "somewhere" for the whole essay. The writer is certainly well acquainted with the habits about which he writes.

We do not doubt but that the writer of this passage, which we met with in an English author, knew something of college faculties, as well as mental faculties, judging from the striking analogy between the process contained in it and that course of events which is often witnessed in our midst: "Skepticism is a *faculty* opposing all *phenomena*, and *intelligibles* all manner of ways; whereby we proceed through the equivalence of *contrary* things, *first to suspension*, and *then to indisturbance*." Perhaps the power of this faculty is often limited by the "argument from contraries." But we cannot close this table-talk without alluding to the "Student's Lament," too long for insertion, and too tender for criticism. We feel like joining in the sentiment of St. Amant:

"Let's not rhyme the hours away;  
Friends! we must no longer play;  
Let's give o'er this fool Apollo,  
Nor his fiddle longer follow;

Fle upon his forked hill,  
 With his fiddiestick and quill;  
 And the Muses, though they're gamesome,  
 They are neither young nor handsome;  
 And their frunks in sober sadness  
 Are a mere poetic madness.  
 Pegasus is but a horse;  
 He that follows him is worse."

It is not the least of some undertakings to bring them to an agreeable close. This is illustrated in the following Politico-Latino effusion, which we insert at length, to show that the springs of classic expression have not yet failed:

## VITA DUCIS PIERCE.

## I.

INFANS was born, ut others sunt  
 Et pure et innocens was ille;  
 Egrot as pueri are wont,  
 Quod omnes know esse quite silly.

## II.

When fuit homo, to senatum ivit,  
 Ut sit with patres suo patrie;  
 Dixit not verbum, sed still eget sit,  
 Et dedit his suffrage contra bonam legem.

## III.

Quam war gestus est adversum Mexico,  
 Ille took up arma, and traxit his ensis,  
 Sed grounding his weapons, ille fefellit humo  
 Et perdidit laurels, simul ac ejus senses.

## IV.

Et nunc Democrats volunt illum to be  
 President regionis qua incoluimus;  
 But priusquam he gets ad illum degree,  
 He 'll habet to learn pugnare sine fainting,  
 Ac vincere his magnum ducem, vocatum, "Old Fuss and Feathers."

We have only to remark that no responsibility is assumed either for the sentiment or the Latinity. But our clepsydra is empty, and we only ask you, dear friends, to join us in our revocation.

"Hallo, hallo, my fancy,  
 Stay, stay, at home with me;  
 I can thee no longer follow,  
 For thou hast betray'd me,  
 And bewray'd me:  
 It is too much for thee.

"Stay, stay at home with me; leave off thy lofty soaring;  
 Stay thou at home with me, and on thy books be poring;  
 For he that goes abroad lays little up in storing;  
 Thou 'rt welcome home, my fancy, welcome home to me."  
 Adieu.

## EXCHANGES.

None received since previous issue; but all anxiously looked for. We hope our untimeliness has not been contagious.

## Contents.

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POLITICAL EMINENCE, . . . . .	35
THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY, . . . . .	38
ORATION: CREATIVE POWER . . . . .	41
THE CASTLE BY THE SHORE, (POETRY,) . . . . .	45
THE ELOQUENCE OF DESOLATION, . . . . .	46
FICTITIOUS LITERATURE, . . . . .	50
BEGGARS AND ORGAN-GRINDERS, . . . . .	55
THE REAPERS, (POETRY,) . . . . .	63
THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA, . . . . .	64
EDITOR'S TABLE, . . . . .	67

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